



## Primary Care Research Fact Sheet

### What is Primary Care Research?

At its simplest level, primary care research can be defined as research conducted in the context of primary health care. It is research that is directed toward better understanding and improving the practice of primary care.

It includes:

- Basic research to develop research methods in the discipline
- Clinical research to inform clinical practice
- Health services research to improve health service delivery
- Health systems research to improve health systems and policies
- Educational research to improve education for primary care clinicians

### Why is Primary Care Research important to doctors and patients?

Research shows that the strength of the primary care component of a country's health system is directly linked to its population's health status including birth outcomes, potential years of life lost, age-adjusted death rates, and age-specific mortality rates. It has also been linked to improved workforce health and productivity, and lower overall health care costs.

Research in primary care is essential for gathering evidence to improve health outcomes and to enhance the field of primary health care. Research conducted in other medical settings and specialties often has limited relevance to the health problems most patients face. It tends to focus on major acute diseases and often does not take into account the concurrent management of multiple clinical problems. Primary care research is not only *about*, but also *within*, primary health care. This is of relevance, given the fact that in 2007, Americans made nearly 1 billion visits to office-based physicians, and 50 percent of those were primary care physicians.

### Available Interview Sources

*Robert L. Phillips, Jr., MD, MSPH*

Robert (Bob) Phillips, Jr., MD, MSPH is the Director of Robert Graham Center, a research center sponsored by the American Academy of Family Physicians that is dedicated to bringing a family medicine and primary care perspective to health policy deliberations. He is on the board of directors for the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) and recently elected to the Institute of Medicine.

He has served on the American Medical Association's Council on Medical Education and as the President of the National Residency Matching Program, and currently serves as Vice-Chair of the Council on Graduate Medical Education. His research interests include physician-health system interactions and their effects on quality of care, geographic information systems, and collaborative care processes. He is on the faculties of the Department of Family Medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University, Georgetown University and George Washington University, and practices medicine at Fairfax Family Practice Center.

*Jeannie Haggerty, PhD*

Holder of a Canada Research Chair on Population Impacts of Health Services, Jeannie Haggerty, PhD, trained in epidemiology and biostatistics at McGill University and did a post-doctoral fellowship in health policy analysis with the Groupe de recherche interdisciplinaire en santé at the Université de Montréal. After 5 years in the Department of Family Medicine at the Université de Montreal, she took up a position in 2005 at Université de Sherbrooke in the Département de Sciences de la santé communautaire with a joint appointment in Médecine Familiale.

Born in Bolivia, Jeannie has a keen interest in international health concerns and considers herself a citizen of the Americas. Fluent at a professional level in Spanish, French, and English, she has maintained a research agenda in both Canada and other countries. Her domain of research is the factors related to accessibility and quality of primary care both in Canada and in developing countries, particularly the impact of health system policies and reforms. Her current research program focuses on the measure of patient and provider experience with patient-centered and effective primary care and how these measures relate to organizational changes and professional practices. Her goal is to present the public voice in a clear way to health care decision makers and to hold them accountable to commitments to equitable access and quality of health care.

*For more information about primary care research, or to schedule an interview with the sources above, contact Kristin Robinson, [krobinson@napcrg.org](mailto:krobinson@napcrg.org), (913) 568-8043.*

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